

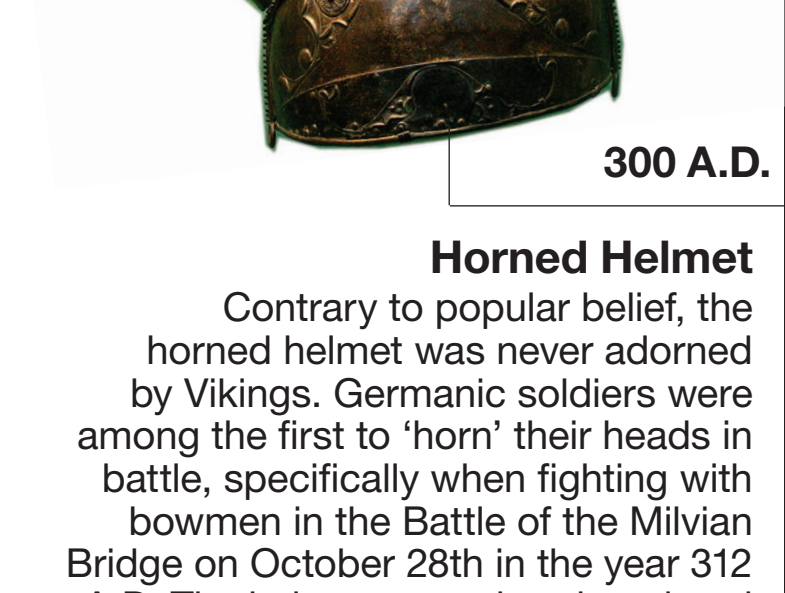


900 B.C.

Sasanian Helmet

This bronze and iron helmet was worn by soldiers in the revival of the Iranian empire, specifically those personally chosen officers under Ardašir I. To say these soldiers were efficient is an understatement: they protected the ruler as he restored Achaemenid military organizations; retained Parthian cavalry; and defended Iran against Central Asiatic nomads and Roman armies all while protecting their heads during battle.

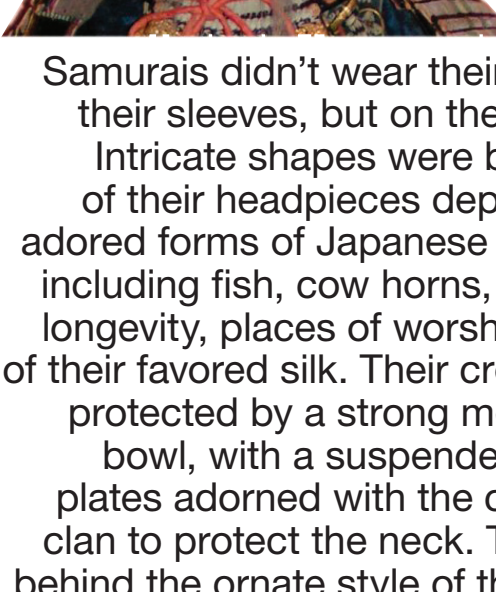
The helmet was fitted to each soldier, with a nose plate and a small opening to see so arrows that rained down on the army wouldn't penetrate the thick cover.



300 A.D.

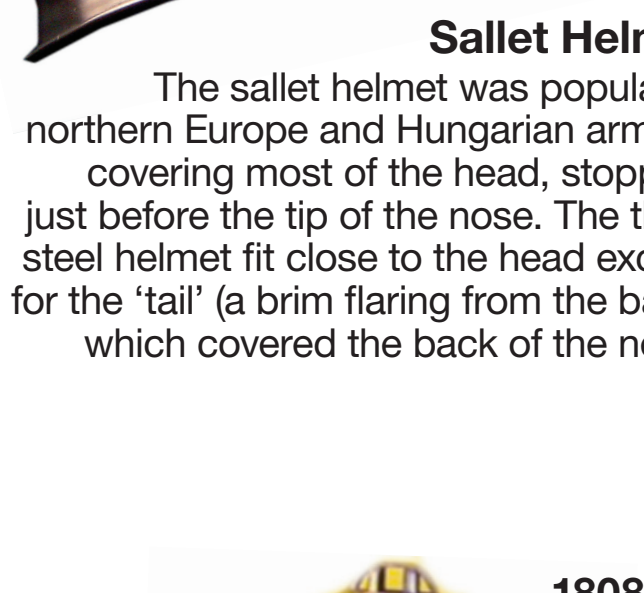
Horned Helmet

Contrary to popular belief, the horned helmet was never adored by Vikings. Germanic soldiers were among the first to 'horn' their heads in battle, specifically when fighting with bowmen in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge on October 28th in the year 312 A.D. The helmets were hand-sculpted usually from iron. While the horns didn't serve any use in battle, their purpose was to give the soldiers an imposing look while being attacked by arrows or swords.



Kabuto

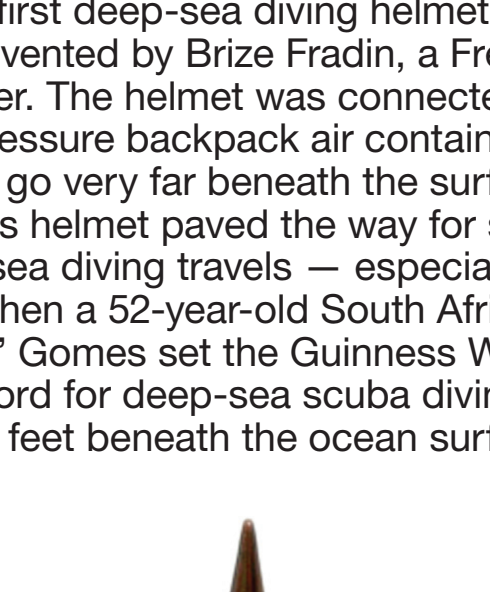
Samurais didn't wear their hearts on their sleeves, but on their helmets. Intricate shapes were built on top of their headpieces depicting their adored forms of Japanese mythology including fish, cow horns, the god of longevity, places of worship or twirls of their favored silk. Their crowns were protected by a strong metal-plated bowl, with a suspended series of plates adorned with the crest of the clan to protect the neck. The reason behind the ornate style of the helmet? The samurais wanted their presence known and felt on the battlefield.



1450 A.D.

Sallet Helmet

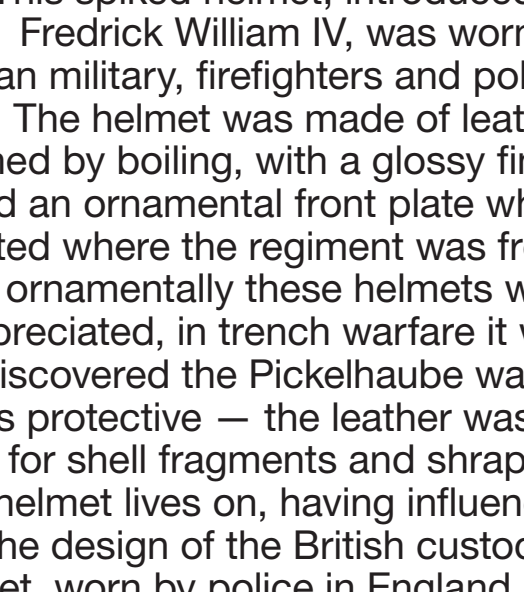
The sallet helmet was popular in northern Europe and Hungarian armies, covering most of the head, stopping just before the tip of the nose. The thick steel helmet fit close to the head except for the 'tail' (a brim flaring from the back) which covered the back of the neck.



1808 A.D.

Deep-Sea Diving Helmet

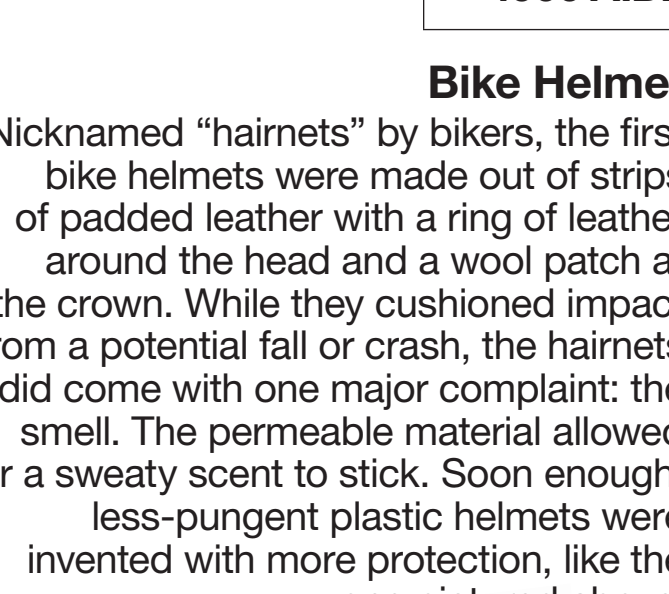
The first deep-sea diving helmet was invented by Brize Fradin, a French engineer. The helmet was connected to a low-pressure backpack air container. It couldn't go very far beneath the surface, but this helmet paved the way for safe, deep-sea diving travels — especially in 2005, when a 52-year-old South African, "Nuno" Gomes set the Guinness World Record for deep-sea scuba diving at 1,044 feet beneath the ocean surface.



1842 A.D.

Pickelhaube

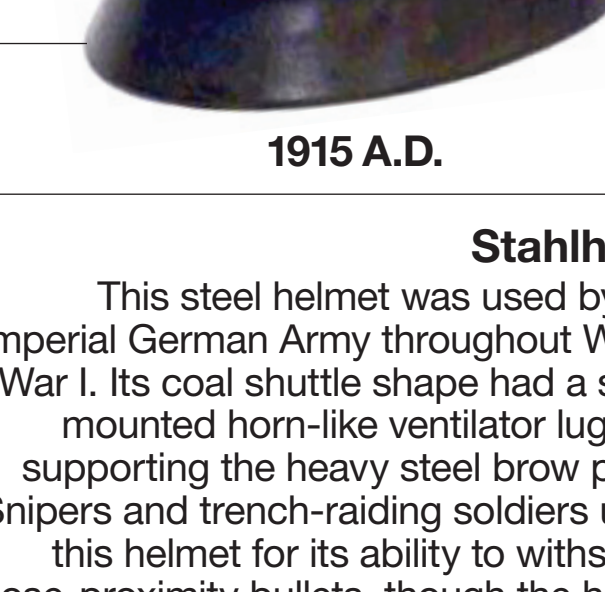
This spiked helmet, introduced by Frederick William IV, was worn by German military, firefighters and police. The helmet was made of leather, hardened by boiling, with a glossy finish and an ornamental front plate which denoted where the regiment was from. While ornamentally these helmets were appreciated, in trench warfare it was soon discovered the Pickelhaube wasn't as protective — the leather was no match for shell fragments and shrapnel. The helmet lives on, having influenced the design of the British custodian helmet, worn by police in England and Wales to this day.



1900 A.D.

Bike Helmet

Nicknamed "hairnets" by bikers, the first bike helmets were made out of strips of padded leather with a ring of leather around the head and a wool patch at the crown. While they cushioned impact from a potential fall or crash, the hairnets did come with one major complaint: the smell. The permeable material allowed for a sweaty scent to stick. Soon enough, less-pungent plastic helmets were invented with more protection, like the one pictured above.

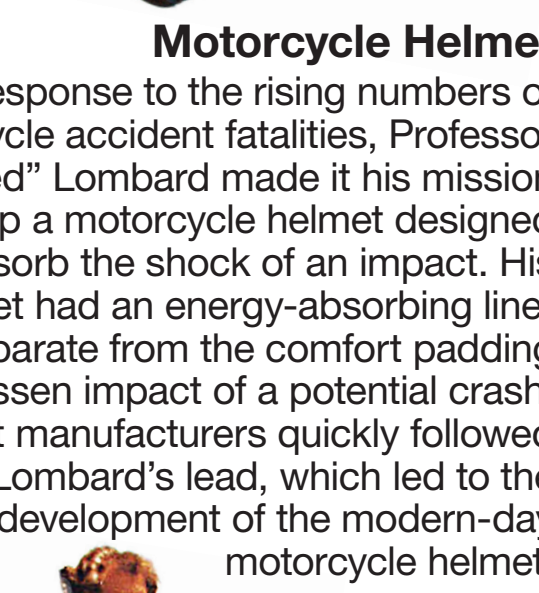


1915 A.D.

Stahlhelm

This steel helmet was used by the Imperial German Army throughout World War I. Its coal shuttle shape had a side-mounted horn-like ventilator lugs for supporting the heavy steel brow plate. Snipers and trench-raiding soldiers used this helmet for its ability to withstand close-proximity bullets, though the heavy steel did tire the German soldiers out and was strictly used for shorter raids. To bear witness to the protective powers of the Stahlhelm, read this first-hand account by the Reserve Lt. Walter Schulze of the 8th Company Reserve Infantry Regiment:

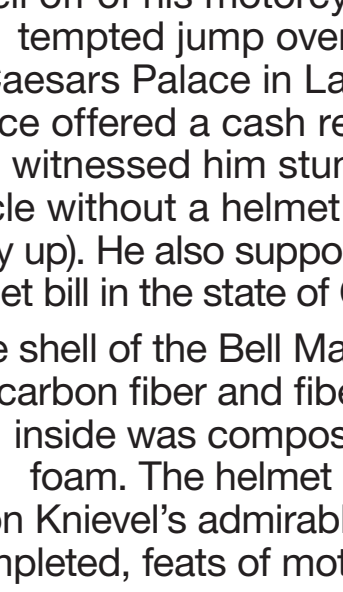
"... suddenly, with a great clanging thud, I was hit on the forehead and knocked flying onto the floor of the trench ... a shrapnel bullet had hit my helmet with great violence, without piercing it, but sufficiently hard to dent it. If I had, as had been usual up until a few days previously, been wearing a cap, then the Regiment would have had one more man killed."



1953 A.D.

Motorcycle Helmet

In response to the rising numbers of motorcycle accident fatalities, Professor C.F. "Red" Lombard made it his mission to develop a motorcycle helmet designed to absorb the shock of an impact. His helmet had an energy-absorbing liner separate from the comfort padding to lessen impact of a potential crash. Helmet manufacturers quickly followed Lombard's lead, which led to the development of the modern-day motorcycle helmet.



1971 A.D.

Evel Knievel's Helmet

With more than 75 attempted ramp-motorcycle jumps, including flinging himself across Idaho's Snake River Canyon on a steam-powered rocket, Evel Knievel put his helmet to work. Knievel was a strong supporter of helmet usage after his own Bell Magnum helmet saved his life after he fell off of his motorcycle during an attempted jump over the fountains at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. Knievel once offered a cash reward for anyone who witnessed him stunting on a motorcycle without a helmet (he never had to pay up). He also supported a mandatory helmet bill in the state of California in 1981. The shell of the Bell Magnum was made of carbon fiber and fiberglass, while the inside was composed of cushioning foam. The helmet was well-needed on Knievel's admirable, yet not always completed, feats of motorcycle strength.



200 A.D.

Secutor's Helmet

The Secutors of Ancient Roman times wore a helmet that covered their entire face, leaving just two small eye-holes for visibility. This was for a good reason — Secutors were specifically trained to fight a trident-armed gladiator. The helmet had a fin-like crest (to avoid getting caught in any nets) and was made of thick metal. Because of the weight and lack of space in the helmet, Secutors had breath constrictions and had to win quickly, or else collapse of exhaustion. While this helmet was not for the claustrophobic, no doubt it saved lives in gladiator combat.



616 A.D.

Sutton Hoo

The story behind this helmet actually starts in 1939, when it was discovered during an excavation that is considered one of the most magnificent archeological finds in England. The ceremonial helmet, along with armor, a lyre and silver from the Eastern Roman Empire, were found in a burial chamber of a ship. The person buried is widely believed to be Rædwald, a powerful East Anglian leader thought of as pivotal in the establishment of Christian rule in England. The headpiece, made out of six steel and bronze plates, was based on a Roman parade-helmet design used in European war combat during the Middle Ages.

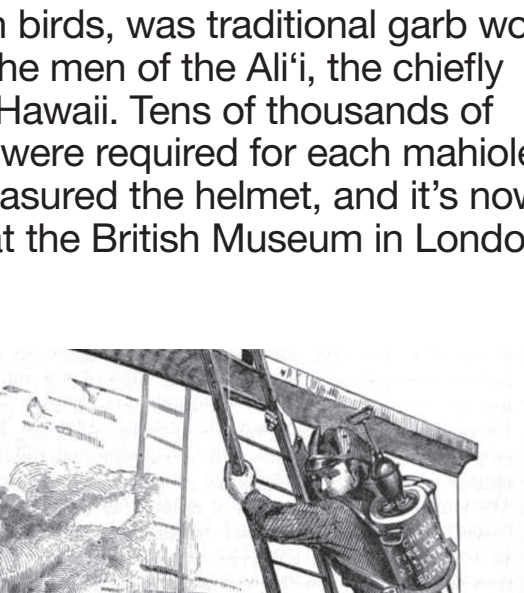
1100 A.D.



Knight's Helmet

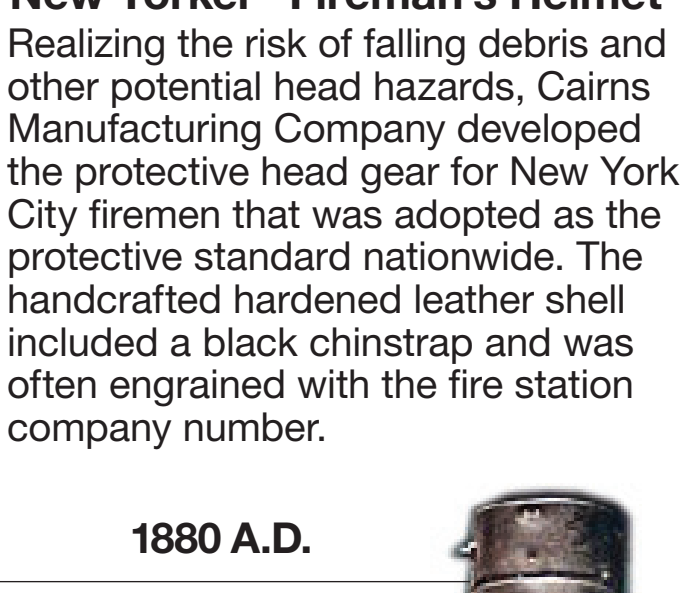
Knights in the Middle Ages made sure to hide every inch of skin behind steel, and their heads were no exception. They wore the metallic suits (as did their horses) in battle, flying colored banners to display power and distinguish themselves. The thick metallic helmet usually featured intricate carvings and decorative features, and it's only opening was a small slit to see through with a flip-up face plate. Eventually, their weighty armor proved impractical and was relegated to ceremonial duties.

1778 A.D.



Mahiole

When famed British explorer Captain James Cook visited Hawaii, he was greeted by a Kalani'ōpu'u (a high chief), who bestowed to Cook one of the highest honors by placing his mahiole feathered helmet on Cook's head. The mahiole, a helmet made from feathers of local Hawaiian birds, was traditional garb worn only by the men of the Ali'i, the chiefly class of Hawaii. Tens of thousands of feathers were required for each mahiole. Cook treasured the helmet, and it's now on display at the British Museum in London.



1836 A.D.

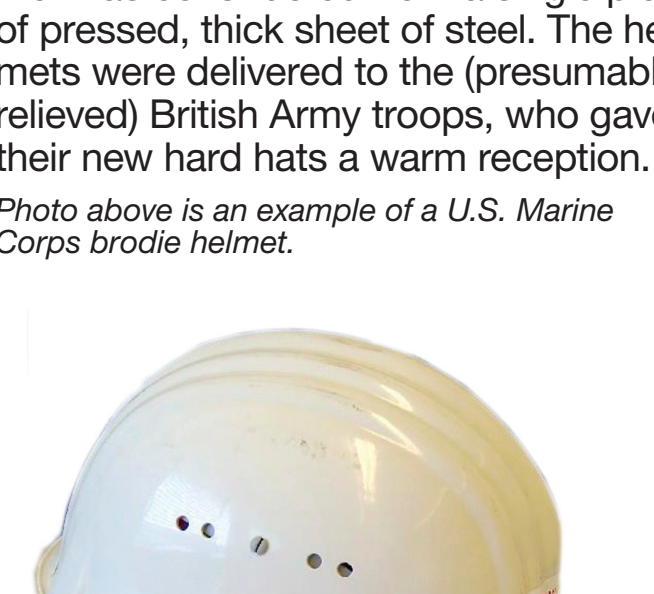
"New Yorker" Fireman's Helmet

Realizing the risk of falling debris and other potential head hazards, Cairns Manufacturing Company developed the protective head gear for New York City firemen that was adopted as the protective standard nationwide. The handcrafted hardened leather shell included a black chinstrap and was often engrained with the fire station company number.

1880 A.D.

Ned Kelly's Helmet

Irish-Australian bush-ranger/outlaw Ned Kelly was considered by some a hero and others an outlaw in his many protests resisting the British colonial ruling class. He was also his own black-smith! Kelly made his very own metal helmet (and other armor) to wear during his confrontation with British police in June 28, 1880. The entire protective getup weighed in at 96 pounds.

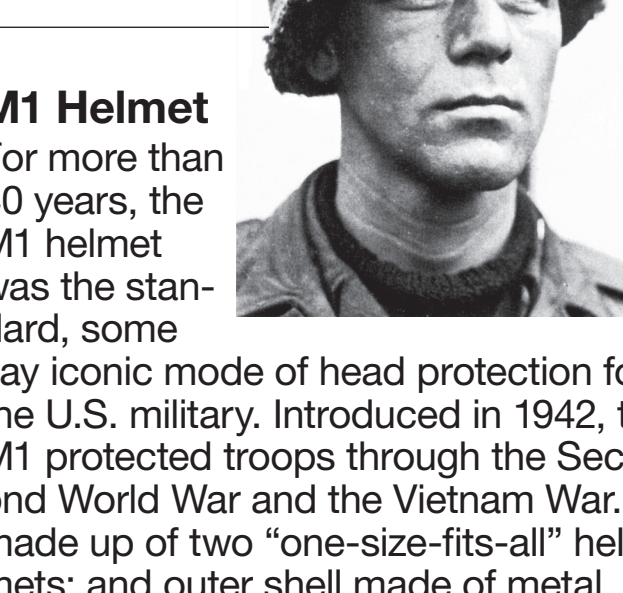


1915 A.D.

Brodie Helmet

During the first year of WWI, soldiers went to battle putting nothing but cloth caps on their crowns, offering (as you've probably guess) little protection. That all changed when British engineer John Leopold Brodie patented the 'brodie' steel combat helmet in 1915. Each helmet was constructed from a single piece of pressed, thick sheet of steel. The helmets were delivered to the (presumably relieved) British Army troops, who gave their new hard hats a warm reception.

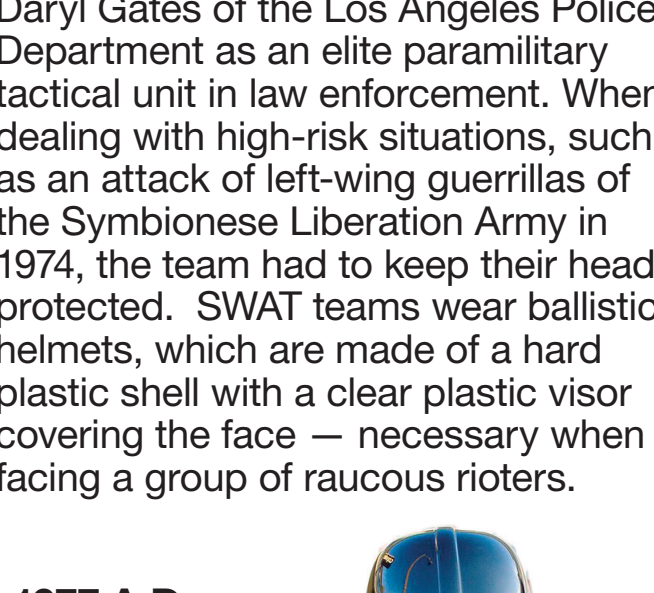
Photo above is an example of a U.S. Marine Corps brodie helmet.



1919 A.D.

Hard Hats

The first protective hats, developed by the E.D. Bullard Company, were hardly 'hard,' seeing as they were made out of leather. The hats were upgraded upon the welcoming of E.W. Bullard (the son of the founding owner), home from World War I, and carrying his hard M1 helmet. Bullard patented the "Steel-Boiled Hat" made out of steamed canvas, glue and black paint, and it was quickly put to use as construction began on the Golden Gate Bridge. Today's hard hats are made out of aluminum.

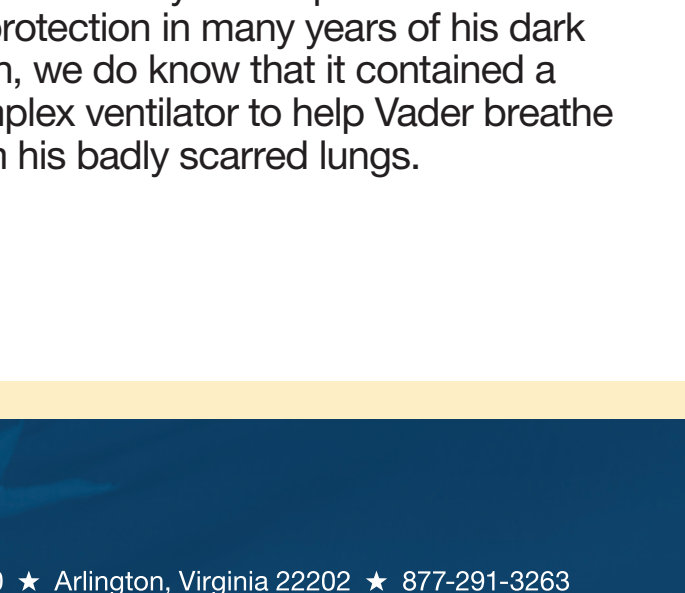


1942 A.D.

M1 Helmet

For more than 40 years, the M1 helmet was the standard, some say iconic mode of head protection for the U.S. military. Introduced in 1942, the M1 protected troops through the Second World War and the Vietnam War. It's made up of two "one-size-fits-all" helmets: and outer shell made of metal, and a hard hat liner. Service members often adorned their helmet with elements of their surroundings to blend in, as our soldier does above.

1968 A.D.



SWAT Team Helmet

The first SWAT (special weapons and tactics) team was established by Daryl Gates of the Los Angeles Police Department as an elite paramilitary tactical unit in law enforcement. When dealing with high-risk situations, such as an attack of left-wing guerrillas of the Symbionese Liberation Army in 1974, the team had to keep their heads protected. SWAT teams wear ballistic helmets, which are made of a hard plastic shell with a clear plastic visor covering the face — necessary when facing a group of raucous rioters.

1977 A.D.

Darth Vader's Helmet

While his battle may have taken place in a fictional galaxy instead of today's combat zones, the protection that Darth Vader's helmet offered is all too real. Whether he was escaping the Death Star's destruction or dueling with the Jedi Knights (and eventually those former friends on the Dark Side), his helmet was with him. Vader was so attached to his helmet that it was only in his final moments did he ask to have it removed.

While it was never revealed what materials went into the construction of the samurai style headpiece that served as protection in many years of his dark reign, we do know that it contained a complex ventilator to help Vader breathe from his badly scarred lungs.

